

# BEE BRIEF

## PLYMOUTH BRANCH NEWSLETTER

February 2012

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**Apiary Meetings for 2012**  
**STARTING TIMES FOR**  
**Saturdays 2pm**  
**Sundays 10 am**

First meeting Saturday March 3rd Bill Finnemore  
Next Meeting Sunday March 4th Apiary Manager.  
Sunday March 11th Novice meeting.  
Introduction and film. Mike Hogan.

### **Honey Show Results**

The winners, and pictures of the honey show, will be in next months issue.

[www.plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com](http://www.plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com)

**Winter Programme: (Elburton Village Hall)**

Thursday, 9th February, 2012 - 7.30 pm. -  
Speaker Glyn Davies  
"Essential Bee Sex"

### **Newsletter index**

Page 2 Winter Feeding

Page 3 Insect Film Festival.

Page 4 Porteath Bee Centre.

Page 5 Items for Sale.

## Winter Feeding

Bill gave a useful resume at the AGM regarding winter feeding. I thought at the time that it would be useful to expand on his advice.

The most common reason for colonies dying in the winter is starvation. This can be due to a number of reasons, but generally caused by insufficient autumn feeding or the colony has such a lot of ivy honey granulated like rocks in the comb that they are unable to eat it! We have been lucky this year and due to the mild weather, the bees have been out foraging and bringing in pollen, as mine were today [23 January]. February is the month when your bees are at most risk. Heft your hives by removing the roof and lifting slightly at the base. If you cannot move it, fine. If you can lift it with difficulty, you should be okay. If it feels light, feeding is necessary.

At this time of the year, candy should be used. You can either make it yourself or get a friendly local baker – yes, there one or two around – to supply you with a block of bakers' fondant. He/she will charge you only the wholesale price if you throw in a pot of honey! Candy is used because the bees will eat it and not be encouraged to fly, which would happen if sugar syrup is used. A small plastic container, such as an empty margarine tub or ice cream container, with two holes about 1 cm in diameter cut into the top, filled with candy and inverted over the feed hole in the crown board usually does the trick.

Keep an eye on the weather. If, towards the end of February we are sitting under a foot of snow, check the containers and if they are empty, fill them up with more candy. If the weather is warm and the bees are flying and you feel that feeding is necessary, you can feed sugar syrup 1:1, but give them only ½ gallon in a contact feeder. What you do not want to do is to fill the brood chamber with syrup – the queen will have nowhere to lay! The reason why a weaker solution is used is because the bees need it as “fuel” and not for “storage”

Bill mentioned opening the hive and pouring a small amount of syrup over the seams of bees. This, in my opinion, should be done only in an emergency when the bees are on their last legs. You can also spray syrup onto the empty combs, which they will eat later. Syrup feeding can be repeated again in March, but if winter has arrived late and the bees are housebound for a few weeks, the shortage of pollen will restrict the queen from laying. However, we live in a mild part of the country and feeding with pollen substitute is usually unnecessary. If in doubt, it will do no harm.

Happy beekeeping!

David Milford

## INSECT FILM FESTIVAL

Saturday 3rd March, 2012

Here at the University we are organising the second Insect Film Festival on March 3rd 2012. Last year' was a great success and besides showing a range of insect related films we also had stands running insect related activities in the atria outside of the universities cinema. I am expanding the size of the event this year and wondered if the Plymouth (or Devon) Bee Keeper association would like to run a stand on the day. There is no charge for the stand and we will provide tables and display boards if required. If you would like to take part just let me know your requirements and I will reserve you a stand. I append an outline of the day below.

### TIMETABLE

11.00 open  
12.00 Talk from Nick Baker (TBC)  
1.30 shorts, Minuscule and Small talk Diaries  
2.30 Talk " why eat insects" Peter Smithers  
3.00 Ento Café with Peter Gorton  
4.30 James and the giant peach  
6.00 Beetle queen of Tokyo  
7.30 Q&A interview with director of Beetle queen of Tokyo via skype to New York  
8.00 Café concrete, insect inspired music  
8.30 The Fly

Also between 12 & 4.00 animation workshops for children and Insect Origami workshops

Stands so far;  
Plymouth city museum  
Buglife  
Royal entomological society  
Bug Club  
Dartmoor Zoo  
Edible Unique  
Peter Smithers  
Biomedical & Biological Sciences

University of Plymouth  
Drake Circus  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL4 8AA  
01752 584547

## Visit to Porteath Bee Centre

On Sunday March 4th, starting at 2:00pm, the branch has arranged for a guided visit to the Porteath Bee Centre. There is no charge for this trip and we haven't got a timetable but we are expected there at 2.00 pm.

There is a lot to see behind the scenes including automated uncapping and bottling operations, and we will be able to ask questions of our hosts. They have 200 hives and loads of experience so this would be a good opportunity to raise any queries you have, especially on the presentation and sale of honey.

You may wish to make your own way there but if you could offer a lift or would like to organise a car-share please meet up at the Tamar Bridge Car Park (our side of the bridge!) to depart by 12:45. The journey time is about 1 hour 10 minutes from Plymouth. You will be able to browse the shop and buy any equipment you need. Everything is undercover and you may wish to stay for a cuppa or a cream tea. Return home when you are ready.

Please let Trevor know if you would like to go so he can give our hosts an idea of how many to expect.



**Porteath Bee Centre** was formed by Heather Jago and Edward Old in 1989 and their story tells how a commercial bee enterprise has grown from small beginnings. Heather started keeping bees in 1970 when a local beekeeper sadly passed away and his wife wanted the bees gone. In 1979 the hives of bees were on Eddie's land in Porteath and the following year both Heather and Eddie started to increase their hives making nuclei and selling honey at the door.

In 1989 the Porteath Bee Centre was built incorporating a shop selling a range of bee supply equipment and their own polishes and candles. The following year they opened the Living Honey Bee Exhibition where you can see the bees behind glass-fronted display cabinets going about their work in an open air environment provided with items like hollow logs and post boxes. There is also a range of bee related equipment and information about the history of beekeeping.

The Beehive Tearoom was opened in 1995 where morning coffee, light lunches and cream teas are now served. By 2000 a honey room was built at the side of the centre because they had so many hives stretching across the north of Cornwall from Port Isaac to St Agnes. Most of the honey is sold in their shop and a few other outlets including the Eden Project.

Last year there were further building works which delayed the PBKA visit. It will be interesting to discover the latest improvements and get inspiration from an enterprise which started so simply.

Kathy Lovegrove

## Bee Suppliers

### **National Bee Supplies** (formerly Exeter Bee Supplies)

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NEW OWNERS  
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## **Beekeepers Supplies**

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sensible prices for the local beekeeper

Contact: [honey@cornwallhoney.co.uk](mailto:honey@cornwallhoney.co.uk)  
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For prices, information, collection or delivery  
Wax exchange available



Stockist of Hiveclean & Chalkbrood

[www.cornwallhoney.co.uk](http://www.cornwallhoney.co.uk)

### **For Sale**

Barn type chicken coop, with nest box.  
Suitable for 4 to 6 birds. All timber has been  
treated with preservative. Never been used.  
£ 60.00

Contact Bill Finnemore 01752 404184



### **For Sale**

100ml wax polish tins £10 per 50.

Contact Tony Curnow

Tel 01752 402801

### **Hembury Bee Supplies**

Agents for the main manufacturers

We can supply all your

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**We can be found at**

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Devon

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**Mobile 07769878476**

**Email [fire@eurobell.co.uk](mailto:fire@eurobell.co.uk)**